

The Next Chapter: Kelpie's Trap

by Karmira

Category: Hakushaku to YÅ•sei

Genre: Humor, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Kelpie, Lydia C.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2011-09-20 21:51:42

Updated: 2015-07-22 18:16:36

Packaged: 2016-04-26 21:38:18

Rating: K+

Chapters: 5

Words: 11,390

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: In which one of Kane's cousins visits him and starts liking the Earl. Will Kelpie warn the Earl or watch quietly as his cousin plays her cards to win him over? In which all of the cast realize what she is except the Earl until much later.

1. Chapter 1

_Due to the site having some issues I had to re-upload this chapter. Sorry for the confusion. _

* * *

><p>This Earl story takes place after the anime ends. Since I have been having a hard time finding the light novels, my mind started coming up with what could happen next. Naturally~ This chapter can be taken as the first part of the newest adventure for the characters, or it can be taken as a separate story.

If there is someone who doesn't want to be spoiled, don't read this!

Rated L for laughter ;)

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><p>Earl and Fairy: the Next Chapter_

Kelpie's Trap

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><p>In which one of Kane's cousins visits him and starts liking the Earl. Will Kelpie warn the Earl or watch quietly as his cousin plays her cards to win him over? In which all of the cast realize what she is except the Earl until much later.<p>

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><p>~Part 1~<p>

* * *

><p>Kelpie emerged from the fountain in the early pink light of dawn. The lights in the Earl's house were still dark. He yawned, shaking long sleep away. It was mid afternoon in the faerie world, and his senses had caught something irritating. Lydia had slept in the Earl's house! In fact, she was sleeping quite freely now in one of the guest bedrooms. He'd quiz her about how she ended up there at breakfast.<p>

Kelpie blinked. "Oi, there's no need to sneak up on me, boy. Didn't I prove myself a friend while fighting the Prince's fairy doctor?" he scoffed, turning from the green gleam of the sprite in Raven's eyes.

Raven's quiet voice slid through the crickets' chorus. "That was one time. Even if I like you," his voice rose in pitch in a query directed towards himself, "I am not sure you mean complete loyalty and friendship to my Lord."

Kelpie chuckled. "Pretty clever. That is damn right! I don't like the Earl that much. I merely saved Lydia's life," he said aloud. He turned his head to the sunrise turning faintly golden. "After all," he murmured, "I could not help myself."

"Why couldn't you help yourself?"

"_Saa ne*_". I doubt you'd understand at your age." Kelpie rubbed at his hair. "It's damn confusing though."

"I see." By the time Raven's attention returned to the kelpie, he had vanished. Raven blinked before turning back to the house to wake and help dress the earl.

****xxxxxxx****

Lydia awoke with the sunlight. With a small smile, she turned in her bed to watch the beams pool on her pillow... or across the carpet and the doorway of the guest room the Earl had insisted she rest in after last night. She sat up, eyes falling on white nightgown she had been provided with. She fiddled with the blue ties at her throat.

"What's wrong, Lydia?" Her fairy cat Nico peeked out from underneath the bed where he had retired. "Are you not well? Were you unable to sleep?"

"No. no, Nico, I am fine." She flashed a warm grin towards him and scratched him behind the ears. "I was just recalling yesterday. That was the first time my knowledge of the Fae world had been put to that kind of a test."

"Well, no doubt about that."

"I just can't seem to believe that.. that this will be only the first time either."

"Ah, now I understand." Nico leapt onto the bed. "You are worried, but Lydia," he stood up on his back paws and leaned over, whispering in her ear, "nothing good will come of worrying about something you can't control." Lydia blinked and he grinned. "Enjoy the late morning air and the peaceful break." He leapt down again. "Not to mention the brownies waiting for their treats."

"Oh, yes, the brownies!" Lydia stood. "They must be getting impatient. I hope I didn't leave them waiting long."

Nico pushed the door open. "It will be fine." He sauntered out.

Lydia plopped back onto her bed. Her hand went up to touch a spot on her forehead. The place where Edgar had kissed her. It had seemed so warm. She dropped her hand. She thought he would kiss her on the lips, but he hadn't. As soon as she closed her eyes, his arms pulled her close and the feather-light caress passed over her forehead.

A light blush overcame her cheeks in the early morning. She hadn't wanted to run away or think it was a game.

Lydia's eyes slid shut. Butterflies twirled in her stomach. She reached up to touch the back of his shoulder and Edgar pulled back. His face remained solemn, almost frowning. She reached out to him...

"Did you like it?"

Her hand paused. "What?"

"Did you like the kiss?" For a moment his mauve grey eyes fell into her hazel green. She couldn't break away. Then a chuckle broke from those lips. "Were you hoping for a kiss on the lips perhaps?"

"What-I- NO! " she squawked, "Don't.. think-think it was like that, idiot Earl." She turned to window of the carriage, warmth flooding her cheeks as Edgar laughed behind her with Raven and Paul admonishing him. She peeked over.

Edgar's smile was slight but there seemed be something different. What was it? In the chaos of exchanges, he caught her eye. Her heart pounded as his lips formed some words.

What did he say then before she had spun around again? Why did it matter to her?

Lydia sprang to her feet. "I just have to ask him. Right? That shouldn't be so hard." She clasped her hands into fists. "So it is time to get dressed."

Nico looked on as Lydia sprang at her suitcase and shook his head. "She's struck." He swiped up a sneaking brownie with his paw. He winked at the little boy, "Let's give her some time alone, ne?"

xxxxxxx

"_Ohayou*_*, Lydia," Edgar greeted.

"Good morning, Lord Edgar," Lydia responded, taking a seat at the balcony table where breakfast was set up. She draped a napkin over her lap and fiddled with the edge. "How is your arm?" she asked, pouring milk into her oatmeal.

"Thanks to Raven's care, much better. My rest was almost perfect. Pass the sugar, lovely Lydia."

"Almost?" she asked, handing it over and ignoring the compliment, as usual. He seemed well enough.

In the lapse of attention, her hand brushed against Edgar's. She gasped and made to pull it back; however, the earl was quicker.

He wrapped his fingers around her small wrist. "It would have been a dream come true if you had joined me," he murmured, kissing her hand, "but I will wait until that is your desire as well as my own." His velvet voice stilled as he held her eyes for a moment. Lydia opened her mouth, intent on asking about the last words in the carriage yesterday, when he let go. Sitting back in his chair, he added, "Your hair looks beautiful in that twist."

"What, oh..." Blushing, Lydia picked up her spoon, idly dipping into her breakfast.

"Thank you, Lord Edgar."

"Edgar," he admonished, voice quiet once more.

Lydia's blush deepened. "Edgar."

"Hello, Lydia," a gay voice called from behind, "don't take a bite yet." Lydia turned, and from his perch, Kelpie grinned. "You'll be disappointed since you left the honey out."

"Kelpie!" Lydia dropped her spoon into her bowl with a clang. "You're back."

Kelpie took one of the free seats. "Why wouldn't I be? Those hounds weren't that grand of a challenge."

"No, well," Lydia stumbled over her words, "I thought that was the case, but I thought it would take you some time at least to heal from your-"

"Lydia," Kelpie sighed in exasperation, "they really weren't any threat to one such as me. I am a more powerful being of the Unseelie Court." He surveyed the table. "You were the one in danger, you and this idiot earl you were intent on saving."

"Morning, Mr. Cane," Edgar smoothly interjected. "I suppose I owe you a small debt of gratitude."

"That's right you do! Stupid earl getting yourself into danger and dragging Lydia with yo-"

"Allow me to provide you with a little treat this breakfast," Edgar interrupted, ushering in a servant holding a covered tray.

"Well, now, it seems like you may have some manners after all." He took the lid off and stared at the six long bacon strips. "Not bad at all," he noted before stabbing and eating one. In a couple minutes, he had picked up another one.

Edgar raised his glass of wine with a coy grin. "Do enjoy yourself," and sipped.

"_Hmm... Edgar seems to be up to something but nothing is happening to Kelpie. My imagination?" _Lydia mused to herself.

"After all, I wonder how long it will take you to realize that half of them," he took a longer sip, "are actually liver strips."

"WHAT?" Kelpie yelled, standing up and backing away. "You- after all I did-" He held a hand to his mouth as his hair began to stand on edge and his face turned green.

"After all you did for me? Oh yes, if you mean nearly taking my soul, then of course I remember." He chuckled as Lydia looked on, stunned. "You fall for it every time. Helping me when Lydia is involved does not even the score..."

"You bastard! I really will kill you-" Face twisting, Kelpie leapt off the balcony and disappeared into the fountain.

"Kelpie!" Lydia hollered, rising.

".. though this trick of mine may," Edgar finished, draining his glass of wine and looking over at Kelpie's plate. One lighter strip remained. "Ah, too bad, he left one liver piece left."

Sighing, Lydia sat again. "Edgar, why do you always pick on Kelpie?" She poured a large stream of syrup over her breakfast. "I mean, he did save your life back in the Prince's trap."

"Lydia, dear Lydia, don't worry your head about him. He'll be fine, albeit he'll lose all of the pork when he tries to get rid of the liver." Chuckling over his trickery, he pushed his chair back and rose, looking over the balcony.

"I didn't mean that. I meant-"

Edgar smiled and turned back towards her. "I know what you meant, sweet Lydia."

"Then why-"

"Because he is my rival."

"Rival? For what? He would never go after the Earl's title. He couldn't-"

"Lydia," Edgar stopped her excuses with that one word, her name said in that whispered dark tone. "He is my rival for something much more important than any title or any throne I may covet." Bowing over her hand, he held out a single, wild star lily. "Your heart, Lydia."

Lydia stared at the glistening flower held out to her and finally took it from him. "It's beautiful."

"I'm glad you like it. Raven was able to find it in the dawn." He caught a lock of her hair in between his fingers. "One solitary flower blooming with the cool light of morning, still shining with mildew from the twilight."

"Edgar..."

Her hair cascaded from his hand. "Your father will be expecting you."

Lydia blinked as the Blue Earl left the balcony unable to call up any words to ask him back. The question from the carriage was completely blown from mind.

****xxxxxxx****

"Kelpie, there you are," Nico yowled. "I have a bone to pick with you."

Kelpie paused in his walk. "What is it, fairy cat? I am still in a touchy mood after the Earl's trick. Do you know where Lydia is?"

"She is probably in the library. And hey, don't distract me." He walked over to face Kelpie. "Stop leaving your moss-covered stones everywhere. They give me the creeps." He held out a pebble covered in orange moss.

"What? I don't leave them-" Kelpie narrowed his eyes, snatching the pebble. "Oi, Nico, where did you find this?"

"Um... the other side of the house I think. Why? Isn't it yours?"

"Fool!" Kelpie snapped. "I leave green mossy pebbles. This is ORANGE, the color of another kelpie."

"What?" Nico squawked, "another kelpie? But that-that is terrible! no fun at all." He waved his arms around, eyes wide, as if to fend off an attack of bees. "They're fiecesome Unseelie Court, man-eating-"

Kelpie put the pebble in his pocket. "I am grateful for your overwhelming trust in me," he commented in a cool voice. "And don't worry, she's not that bad."

"She?" Nico squeaked.

"Ah. She's a cousin of mine, been hiding in unsightly places for us noble, underwater-"

"They're not UNSIGHTLY!" a woman screamed from behind them.

Nico leapt in the air, popping into invisibility. Kelpie winced, covering his ears, then whirled around. "STOP YELLING, IDIOTIC FEMALE KELPIE!" he roared.

"Hmph, as if you have any reason to thrash me with your tongue with words at that volume," a red-headed woman in a white dress commented, pulling out a fan and waving air into her face.

"It's your pitch, stupid cousin. Sometimes I wish I never met your side of the family. You're too queer."

She tossed her head and snapped her fan shut. "I highly doubt you're a better example. I can smell the chicken blood from here. Did you find human meat too rich for your diet?"

Kelpie laughed. "That is an old argument, you old hag. I gave you the reason last time you decided to return to your roots. Losing touch from too much sun?" He patted her shoulder, feigning a long sigh.

She squealed, backing up a few feet. "What did you do that for?"

Kelpie started, as if surprised at her pain, then a wide grin spread across his face. His eyes twinkled in wicked merriment. "What? Actually stayed down on the coasts of Spain long enough to get a sunburn on your white coat? Spending too much time luring Spanish men to your side? Or perhaps they were too suave for you to control."

His cousin gaped at him. "How could you? You- you undignified, ugly seahorse!"

"My, my, if I am ugly in your eyes, I am quite fine with that." Kelpie folded his arms. "After all, I have much better sights than to look to mount a disobedient horse like you." He continued, even as her eyes narrowed and a red light began to fill them. "You couldn't even compare to the foot of my fair Lydia. Why, I bet your coat is no longer milky white after all that Southern sun."

Nico looked back at the female and faded back into the surroundings. Her red hair sparked as she took three steps towards her cousin and his cocky grin. "At least I am not pulling a carriage for a puffed up Earl who is moving in on the girl I left my natural behavior behind for. My coat may not look nearly as pristine, but your coat has turned dusty from London's streets," she hissed. "I am sure you are nearly as tame as a plow-horse."

"Lydia's hand on her pen slipped, scratching through her notes, as a huge BANG and two loud cries of horses ripped through the quiet afternoon..."

-To be continued-

NOTES:

*Saa ne: a common thoughtful Japanese phrase that is similar to I wonder or I don't know.

*Ohayou: Good morning in a familiar way

* * *

><p>Please review and offer your opinions. It might give me more

ideas of what to do next, besides torture people with Keplie's cousin
;)<p>

2. Chapter 2

_I know this chapter is shorter than the first. That was the only
stopping place I could find._

* * *

><p>I'm sorry this update is so late. Life interfered yet again, and
I had a major block on what I wanted to happen next. Two scenarios
kept playing in my mind. In the end, it morphed into something
completely different. I hope you enjoy it. More Kelpie and cousin
fighting before a more touching scene.<p>

I thank you very much for adding this story to your alerts or your
favorites, **Linariel, Yuukii Hiime, midnightrosel2206,** and a
special smile goes to **Weeping Isislogged off **and
CeruleanDreamCatfor their cute comments. They were short but
sweet.

Weeping Isislogged off, there is a LOT more coming.

3

CeruleanDreamCat, don't worry. I am not tired of writing about
Kelpie yet. At ALL.

* * *

><p>~Kelpie's Trap Part II~<p>

* * *

><p>Lydia's hand on her pen slipped, scratching through her notes, as
a huge BANG echoed out. The cry of horses ripped through the
afternoon. Lydia blinked, springing to her feet and running to the
window. Gasping, she ran to her door.<p>

Outside, Nico backed even deeper into the bushes.

The dusty white mare backed up, biting at the black stallion which
nearly reared a second time. The white mare's eyes glowed with a dark
red light, while the black stallion's eyes were dark with a strange
glimmer in the center. Ears back against their skull, the two horses
circled each other. The stallion snorted, tossing his head. The mare
huffed then snapped at his heels. The stallion closed in. Once more,
the thunder of their hooves echoed out over the yard as the two
bodies slammed into each other, neither one giving way. The stallion
broke free and reared up, nearly catching the mare on her shoulder.
Tail swishing, the mare sidestepped and bit at the stallion's leg.
Flanks pushed against each other, trying to make the other fall
first. Their shrieks of challenge rose higher.

A shout rang out. "STOP THIS AT ONCE, KELPIE!" The black stallion
broke free of the mare, trotting a few feet away.

Lydia gasped from a doorway, hands on her knees. "What-kind of
behavior is this?" she huffed, "on the Edgar's grounds too..." She

sucked in a breath. "You can't-break anything here."

"Lydia!" Nico squawked. "It's dangerous. GET-GET AWAYYY!" he hollered, waving his hands from his hiding spot.

"No," Lydia barked back. "Kelpie, that is enough," she said, eyes on the stallion.

For a moment, the two eyes remained locked, then the shape morphed. Kelpie folded his arms. "It wasn't my fault, Lydia. She called me out by using one of the worse insults you can give a kelpie." His shirt and pants were ripped in places, and a cut had opened on his cheek.

"You deserved it," his cousin spat, a few away, likewise back in her form. Her eyes still glinted underneath her ruined hairdo. She swirled around in her ripped skirt. "And I won the fight."

Kelpie turned around. "No, you didn't. You need to lift the flimsy shawl around your arms," he stated, voice neutral.

"Wha-what?" She hissed, as blood slowly began dotting her lacy shawl.

"You are bleeding more than me; therefore, I win the challenge."

"Noooo," she whined. "This was one of my favorites." She whirled on Kelpie. "You-you beast!"

"Save it for another place, Annette. I won't fight again if Lydia has forbade it," Kelpie murmured, voice almost bored. He walked over to Lydia. "I apologize for our destruction."

"It's okay," she said gently. "Annette?"

"Yeah, one of the names she uses nowadays," Kelpie replied dismissively.

"You need names to travel around in public, idiot," his cousin spat, "and don't go using them as you please. I don't need to remember your voice uttering my name."

"With a brain like that, I'm shocked that is even an issue."

"You-"

"So you're Kelpie's cousin?" Lydia blurted out, cutting off the incoming battle. "I'm a little surprised. I thought kelpies were solitary faeries."

Annette opened her fan again. "We are. We have to be." She sighed. "Don't you realize what most of us eat? If we lived in groups, we would have been found out long ago." She scoffed, tossing the shawl into a pool, where it dissolved, "and you're supposed to be a fairy doctor."

"I am a fairy-"

"I won't insult you like that. My cousin will have an issue," Annette interrupted, "and kill me when he returns."

"Returns?" Lydia blinking, turning, and sighed. Kelpie had disappeared again. She had wanted to thank him properly. "He would never do that."

Lydia turned back to the female kelpie, who was leaning over the fountain, pouring water into her hair. She threaded her fingers through her locks, styling them. Lydia watched as she conjured a few hairpins, moved locks around her crown, pinning them in place and framed her face with lighter strands bit by bit. Lydia glanced down at her own reflection and the simple twist in her hair. Annette caught her gaze. Lydia blinked and returned the look in the water with a small smile.

Annette glared. "I really don't like you." Lydia paled. "Because of you, he changed. And for what?" The woman whirled around, hair back in perfect ringlets. "For someone who is too ignorant to even understand his feelings. A meek mouse."

Lydia twisted her dress in her hands. "I do understand."

"You won't return them."

Lydia's eyes watered. "I can't... it's too early."

Annette bit her lip. "You're -"

"Leave, Annette," a smooth voice ordered, clipped. Half in the shadows of an oak, arms folded, Kelpie stared his cousin down. "I won't let you finish that thought."

Annette folded her own arms. "I came here for a reason, you know."

"I imagine. It can wait."

Annette held his gaze for a couple minutes. "Fine. I'm leaving for now." She walked over and paused. "You are too soft." She spun around a hedge.

"I'm sorry I left you alone with her like that, Lydia."

"That's alright," Lydia muttered, twirling the water with her finger. "Are you-"

"I'm fine," Kelpie said, cutting her off. "It was only a scratch and I swallowed much more liver the last time."

"I -I'm sorry that Edgar-"

"Don't apologize for him." Kelpie interrupted once more. Staring into her dazed hazel eyes, he sighed and strode over to her side. "Putting that aside, Lydia, are you -"

"Lydia," Nico yowled, moving out from under the bushes, "didn't you have something you wanted to write down before this kelpie caused a ruckus?"

Lydia and Kelpie stepped back from each other. Lydia bent down. "Nico, where were you all this time?" She giggled. "You didn't really run away, did you?"

"I would have you know that when faeries of the Unseelie Court clash, it is not pretty. I was looking for Raven. He would have been a really nice distraction."

Nico..." Kelpie started.

"I was doing my best to protect you," Nico continued, spreading his arms and ignoring Kelpie.

Lydia smiled. "I'm sure you were, Nico. Thank you." She rose and met Kelpie's gaze once more. "I'm sorry, Kelpie, can we continue this conversation at another time? I don't think it will be good if I don't record all I noticed at the Prince's court as soon as possible, and I was too tired to do it last night."

Kelpie sighed, shrugging with a slight smirk. "You're hopeless. Don't use your obligations as a fairy doctor to work too long."

"I won't." Lydia replied with a larger smile. Kelpie watched as she took the steps and disappeared into the house.

"You should have noticed, Cat-"

"I am not a cat! I am a fairy cat." Nico retorted.

"You are still a feline," he argued back, facing Nico. "You interrupted me on purpose."

"I don't know what you mean."

Kelpie persisted. "Hiding from it doesn't help her."

Nico folded his own arms and glanced at the house. "It really isn't your place to decide that, underwater-"

"You... "

"She didn't want to talk about it, and really, you should know that her mind isn't clear enough for that."

Kelpie blinked. "Now, why would she -"

"Time to go. Get out of here already. You smell queer from letting yourself loose. You don't want to attract Raven's faerie, do you?" Nico popped out of existence with a leap.

"That fairy cat," Kelpie muttered. He turned his eyes to the house, still for a few minutes, then chuckled. "I'll come by in the evening. I still have a question for you, Lydia." Spinning around, he leapt into the fountain.

* * *

><p>I hope you enjoyed the little KelpieLydia scenes. Next chapter we have more Edgar appearances and Annette returns with a catch~_

_Please review and comment after reading. _

3. Chapter 3

This is a longer chapter with a lot of information.

Thanks to the lovely comments left by ****Nusuki Kisuke, Merrow Girl, Ella of the Moon,**** and ****CeruleanDreamCat's**** second comment, I finally found the time to speak to my Earl and Fairy muse and finalize this ^^ Each comment made my day, but the final scene wouldn't work out quite right. I apologize that it took soo long, but I wasn't trying to neglect you guys or this story. It will not be dropped even if the updating period isn't consistent yet.

Also, I extend a welcome and thanks to ****pokiil,**** who has joined my readers. I hope I don't disappoint.

****CeruleanDreamCat****, this chapter fulfills your wish

~

Unfortunately, my muse decided to mess up my order of things, so you don't get to see Edgar or more of Annette in this chapter. However, I don't think you will be too disappointed with the alternative.

****~ Kelpie's Trap Part III ~****

The volume closed with a thunk. "There," Lydia sighed, setting the feather quill back in the inkwell. "All written out and recorded for later reference." She pushed her chair back and stood up, glancing out the window and the evening sky. "It's late. I wonder how long I have been in here." Her hand settled on top of her journal and chuckled. "Oh well, there was a lot to write after all. It couldn't be helped." She hefted the book in her hands and turned around to slide it into the bookshelf behind her.

As the book thudded into place, Lydia's hand lingered, hazel eyes dazed as she slid back into her thoughts. I may be done recording the event itself, but I am nowhere near the bottom of all that occurred that night, she told herself grimly.

Lydia could easily recall the cruel glint in the other fairy doctor's eyes.

During that short meeting, she had recognized the cruel glint in his eyes, shivering from the slow slight smirk. She couldn't help but wonder how someone controlled some of the most volatile fae in the Unseelie Court yet, the answer was before her. She didn't understand, she didn't want to understand, but that smile and the darkness curling around him seemed to explain the way all by itself. She had been terrified. In addition, there was the fact that Edgar seemed to know the leader behind him, someone called the Prince...

Lydia let out a long sigh as her hand fell. Even if he had almost died, Edgar hadn't mentioned that night or the Prince, and somehow she didn't think he would. She could only do her best at protecting him with what she knew.

She clenched her hand. Hopefully, her way would powerful enough. She

refused to contemplate the other way.

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Lydia jumped at a knock on her door.

"Come in," she called.

Pushing open the door with his back, Raven entered carrying a covered tray. "Lydia-sama, may I ask how the work is coming along?"

She sighed. "I'm finally done, thank you, Raven. Is that dinner?"

"Yes," the dark haired boy stated, placing his tray on the coffee table by the sofa. He rose again. "Although Edgar-sama was loathe to disturb you, he insisted that leaving you alone any longer would be hazardous to your health and ordered me to bring some food as well as find some wine. I have yet to acquire that as Edgar didn't give the type required." His pitch rose in inquiry.

Lydia smiled and shrugged. "Thank you, Raven, but I think the water on the tray will be sufficient. There is no reason to continually treat me to expensive items such as Lord Edgar's wine."

"There is lemonade on the tray."

"Then lemonade will-"

"But the Master requested wine. I have only neglected that order so far because I wish to know which bouquet would suit you."

"Lemonade is perfect, very good," Lydia explained, a bit flustered. "Anyway, Raven, how long have I been in here?"

Raven blinked. "If you haven't left here since this afternoon..."

"I haven't."

"Then, you have been in here roughly six hours."

"Thank you, Raven. Has Edgar already eaten?"

"He has eaten and has been sent to bed early to continue recovering from his shoulder wound," Raven stated, pouring her a glass of lemonade and holding it out.

"Already?" Lydia murmured, taking it and running her finger over the cold rim.

"Yes." Raven fluffed out the tablecloth and set out the salt and pepper grinders. "It is necessary."

"Necessary?"

Raven continued setting out her dinner materials, not looking up. "His shoulder must be completely healed before the next party begins next week."

Lydia sipped her lemonade, "I see..." and nearly choked. "Wait, NEXT

WEEK?" Raven, seemingly undisturbed by her squawk, looked up. Lydia took a quick swig. "Raven, did you say that there was a party coming up next week?"

"Yes."

"But yesterday - I mean we just barely returned all in one piece from -"

Finished with his preparations, Raven stood up and moved aside. "I assure you, Lady Lydia, all the preparations have been made. They were made before and cannot be altered."

"Before?"

"Yes. Now please sit down and eat."

Lydia sat down, mind whirling. "Raven, what is happening at this party?"

"There will be refreshments and polo during the afternoon and in the evening there will be a formal dinner and dance."

"I see." Lydia chuckled and unwrapped the roast beef sandwich from the napkin. "It would appear he has quite the schedule set up." She reached for the pepper. "Just have him take care of that shoulder. It would be a shame for it to open up when I am not here."

"But, Lydia-sama, do you not know? Of course you will be here."

The pepper tipped. "What did you say?"

Raven blinked. "Your presence is highly crucial to the events."

Lydia took a deep breath. "See here, Raven, I had no idea that there was another event this soon after the first." She offered a small smile. "I'm afraid it is impossible for me to prepare in time. Therefore, I cannot-"

The dark servant leaned close. "You will attend. Lord Edgar has ordered it."

"Raven.." Pursing her lips, Lydia pushed him backwards. "I already told you no."

"But you are Lord Edgar's fiancée."

"I've already told you I am not his fiancée, and it's rude to be persistent."

"Edgar will be upset."

"Raven..." Lydia set her food aside. "Listen, Raven, I do care for Edgar, but I am not his fiancée and I can't always be on hand when he wishes it." Raven continued to watch her with his large green eyes, not blinking, and she gentled her tone. "Maybe I had my own plans for that day. Since Edgar didn't tell me, I really cannot be expected to attend."

Raven turned his head to the window. "You haven't told us of these plans."

"I ... I don't have to," Lydia said, voice stern, and fiercely ignoring how her heartbeat had quickened.

"Your dress is prepared. Also--"

"I can buy my own dresses."

"It's because you saved his life."

"I didn't - It's because of that?"

"Yes."

"Edgar... he bought..." She gulped and stood up, struggling with her composure. Nausea seemed eminent with her heart pounding as it was at the moment. Her voice came out shaken and hurried. "Raven, I can't accept this. I saved my own life that night, and ... " In an instant Lydia remembered Edgar's smooth but very warm lips descending on her forehead. A small blush formed on her cheeks, yet with her stomach still rolling, she looked down. "I already received payment for that. I was doing my job as his fairy doctor..."

Raven blinked and took a step towards her. "Lydia, I didn't mean to distress you. What -"

A large hand settled on and ruffled Raven's hair. He turned and Kelpie dropped his hand. Eyes strangely not intimidating and tone low, the tall fae spoke, "Worry about this some other time, kid. She's been working hard and needs to eat then rest."

That was true, the boy reasoned to himself. He turned around and glanced at the Lady Lydia again, who hiccuped into her glass of lemonade, chestnut hair falling over her eyes. He turned again and met Kelpie's solemn gaze, speaking the first thought that came to mind. "I didn't mean to upset her."

"I know you didn't," the kelpie replied, voice still quiet.

"I'm fine, Raven, Kelpie, I'm just tired," Lydia muttered then, voice hoarse.

Kelpie let out his own sigh. "I am sure that's the answer, Lydia. Continue eating."

"I don't need you to tell me that... "

Raven looked around again. The atmosphere seemed muted but not necessarily on a calmer level. "I will tell Edgar that the plans might need adjusting."

Kelpie nodded. "Go ahead and tell the earl that."

Raven was finished and met Kelpie's eyes once more. "I cannot let you stay for long. It is late and Lady Lydia shouldn't have visitors for long when she is exhausted. You are also a male."

Kelpie startled then flashed a trace of his usual smirk. "I am quite

aware of that." He schooled his expression in the next moment. "I will be gone by the time you check on her again."

"You better be," Raven stated, a hint of warning in his stoic voice. Kelpie only chuckled. Blinking, Raven took a moment to watch Lydia nibble on her meal before bowing and leaving the room.

.

Lydia finished her first half of sandwich in silence, aware and glad of Kelpie's presence on her left. So far, Raven had not returned with wine. Lydia poured herself another glass of lemonade, slowly. Listening to the healthy sloshing of liquid against the glass, she pictured the brook by her house in Scotland, the quiet of her days there. Crickets and a few toads sang in harmony outside. Setting the pitcher down, Lydia turned to the napkin and began folding it into a triangle.

Beside her, Kelpie chuckled and draped his larger hand over hers, tugging the cloth free. He set it on the tray away from Lydia before settling the other on the top of her head and murmuring, "There will be dark circles under your eyes, lass."

In spite of herself, a smile came over Lydia's face. "And then, I'll terrify the brownies into thinking some strange witch lady put a curse on me." Her smile grew as Kelpie began ruffling her hair, pushing her head back and forth. "You haven't called me "lass" the entire time here." She had forgotten how much that nickname in his voice cheered her up.

Kelpie scoffed under his breath. "Well, I couldn't give away my best move to every idiotic man around you," he continued to groom her hair with his hand, "especially not to that flippant earl. Besides, it wouldn't stay special if I used it every time."

Lydia beamed and leaned her head against his shoulder. "I always know I can count on it being genuine from you." Her voice dropped. "Sometimes, I wish I could go back to that simplicity, even with..." Her hand clenched over her skirt.

Kelpie let his hand fall to her shoulder and pulled her gently against him. "If you do, I could always make it happen."

Lydia's eye fluttered as she tried to push away her exhaustion. "You mean, by kidnapping me in my dreams? That was quite the underhanded way... to play the hero."

"I think I prefer that to you being in danger."

"I can't-"

"I know," Kelpie sighed. "Lydia, lass, you are practically falling asleep in my lap. Are you sure you don't want to marry me?"

"What- What?" Lydia pushed herself up and off Kelpie, bonking her table and blinking away her fatigue, blushing furiously. "I don't want to marry you. I already gave you a bargain."

Kelpie caught the falling glass. "I know. Here, take a drink. Are you going to eat the other half?"

"What- Oh. No, I'm not. Go ahead and take the meat. It will make me feel less bad about wasting Edgar's food."

Kelpie folded napkin back and fished the roast beef out of the bread, setting that back on the tray. "You," he peeled a slice away from the slices and gulped it down, "can waste as much of his food and money as you want." He ate another one. "I don't really care."

"I know you don't, Kelpie." Chuckling, Lydia took a light drink from her glass. "That doesn't mean I don't."

"Too bad for that." Kelpie leaned back and swallowed the rest of the meat. "It would lighten his gilded pocket. By the way, Lyida," he said, turning back to her, "I told you to not spend too much time working. You and I both know that the information wouldn't have gone anywhere if you spread the writing out. You have far too good a memory."

Lydia laughed and sliced off a portion of dessert, cheesecake with blueberries. "You caught me." Her fork dragged on the china. "It was an excuse to get away."

"I thought as much. Was it my-"

"No," Lydia rushed in, "it wasn't Annette." She lowered her eyes. "It wasn't that. Kelpie, am I-"

With a loud groan, Kelpie stood up from the sofa, stretching to his full height. "Ask me that question and I'll ask mine after you have had time to rest and clear your mind."

"What question did you have?"

"I'll tell you later, lass." He grinned as the small smile rose on Lydia's lips and stole over her beautiful meadow green eyes. "Sweet dreams, Lydia."

She set her fork down and rose as well. "Enjoy your night, sea raider."

Kelpie smirked and saluted her before pushing her window open. He vaulted down into the yards.

Leaving the window open, Lydia sat down and began to eat dessert.

* * *

><p>Leave comments please._

Another Edgar and Kelpie duel next chapter~ I wonder, will Kelpie lose again? ~hint hint~

4. Chapter 4

Wow, you guys certainly loved how I developed the relationship in the last chapter. I got double the amount in comments and reviews. Even so, I was very slowww updating. I'm REALLY sorry about that. It wasn't on purpose, I swear. I tried and tried to get more done.

I think I worried some with how long it's been, so I will repeat what I said before. I WILL NOT drop this story. With me, that is not a problem. The problem is the consistent updates.

There are notes of gratitude before the story. Skip it if you wish. I won't mind.

A special thank you to **Musical . Blossoms****'s Strength**. I was really happy to hear you praise the feeling of my words. I hope this story continues to light up your day and I hope to hear more of your thoughtful comments. Thank you for joining my readers.

Thank you to **CeruleanDreamCat** for commenting again. It's really nice to hear from you each chapter, even if it is short. I hope you don't mind that Kelpie left the stage this time.

Pokiil, glad to hear a sweet comment from you, too. I'm happy you were so psyched up after reading it.

ekochan129, **I'm thrilled this story is now on your favorite list after this chapter, and Christopolis is following it.**
Thanks!

Many more thanks to all my other guest reviewers. I got one nearly every month. I will try not to worry you again.

My birthday was really special this year. I was added to someone's favorite authors for the first time on that day! A HUGE thank you to you, **hailey . duran. ****9.**

Maybe it didn't seem that way but each review really did help me muddle through this chapter. Edgar's viewpoint was not easy the first time entering it. Have a wonderful new year ^^

Enjoy ~

* * *

><p>~ Kelpie's Trap Part IV ~

In another room of the mansion, the current Blue Earl stared at the moonlit sky with dull eyes. In his unblinking gaze, the light of the stars seemed to disappear into a mauve grey mist, extinguished, in the face of his serious demeanor. Half dressed, his shirt had been removed, revealing the careful bandages over his shoulder and across his chest. Older scars grew bold in the light of a few candles and the cold moon. Ice clinked in his glass of whiskey as he raised it, draining the burning liquid in one gulp. Again, Edgar returned his eyes to the night sky.

Ash and cinder smoke filled his nose, seeming to obscure the moon, along with a more acidic hint he didn't want to place. His eyes narrowed. _

A knock and his companion's low voice brought him back. "Edgar-sama, are you awake?"

Tired smile settling over his features, the Blue Earl called back, "I am. Come in." _ As you already know I am, Raven_, Edgar added to

himself.

His manservant opened the door with one hand, holding a cup on a tray in his other hand. "I brought some cider, my lord." Noticing the whiskey bottle, he gave it an appraising look. "I don't think spirits help the nightmares as much as you think." He set the tray down and took the bottle, dropping it in the waste bin by the door, before turning his intense stare back on his master. "It caused troubles with Lady Lydia last time as well."

Edgar chuckled. "It did, didn't it? And I never got what name it was that I muttered either." He pulled a curtain over the window, covering the sight of that frigid moon. Another memory pulled at his mind. With a great effort, Edgar pulled his eyes away from the inviting calm darkness of the drapes. Turning his gaze to his manservant and calling as if from a distance, he inquired slowly, "Did you deliver my message to her?"

"Yes, Edgar-sama," Raven paused. After a few minutes, he walked over to his master's bed, pulling back the orderly blankets. Bending over, he retrieved various discarded pillows, fluffing and placing them back on the bed. "She believes you have gone to sleep," he added quietly as he worked.

The Earl lowered his eyes. "Good." Edgar glanced back at the curtains, following the crossings of the linen, then deliberately turned his back on them. "I don't want her to see me like this." He fell to the sofa, brushing damp locks back from his eyes.

Raven set the last pillow back on the bed. "If that is what you wish," he intoned, voice likewise low.

Sighing, Edgar murmured, "It'll pass, Raven. She doesn't need to worry anymore than she already does, and the last time you brought her over, I did do something unforgivable."

Raven glanced up, taking in the lifeless eyes of his kind master, the man who had taken him in and given him a place by his side, stern enough to prevent needless killing from the sprite within him and generous enough to wipe away the blood from him in what killing did occur. Those eyes that shared all his pain had begun to shine ever since Lydia had saved his life, something no one else, but someone bound to him, would have done.

Edgar looked up, caught his look, and turned away. "Raven, light the fire."

"Yes, master." Raven passed him and knelt at the fireplace, experience making the lighting easy and quick.

The warm light pushed back the cold beams of the night. Raven stood again. His master's eyes stayed on the fire.

Edgar stared deeply into the flames, once more caught in another time, another night. His eyes turned glassy, deepening in color, the longer his mind fell into that memory.

A cold stainless full moon shone above the tragedy below. Blood stained his hands. From whom, he didn't recall. As the fire burned and the heat rose, flames licking out of the corner of his eyes, the

sounds of people faded. He was alone. _

He wouldn't die on that night. He wouldn't be allowed to forget.

Raven's voice brought him back.

"My sister is no longer here, and you need to keep your health up. If you don't improve soon, I will tell Lady Lydia," the manservant warned in a calm voice. He pushed the iron screen across the fireplace, blocking the stark swirling flames and softening the curling heat. His small form rose. "Please try the cider and rest, milord. Sitting here in the dark and recalling those days aren't helping your situation." He knelt beside him, staring into his eyes with his deep look, then passed a cloth over his head. "It wouldn't do to get a fever either."

Edgar chuckled, a wane smile coming back to his lips. "No, I suppose not, though more often than not, you leave me to it longer than two nights. Is the coming ball the reason for this change?"

"Your dance party has no relevance whatsoever," Raven returned swiftly. "If you hurt Lydia unconsciously again, your condition will worsen," he explained, eyes wide and serious.

"Lydia..." Edgar chuckled again, looking back into the flames. "I wonder if I can get any closer to her with this party or if I am foolish to think an event like that would open her heart further."

"You're a fool," Raven stated, blunt, beside him.

"True, I am a fool," Edgar leaned back, "a big fool who doesn't know when to retreat or give up, one who should have died a long time ago. I understand that. But," Edgar's eyes opened and he rose from his sofa, taking a poker from the wall, "I am a fool on a mission with a fairy on my side. As long as I have her..." _As long as those gorgeous sunset locks aren't too far behind . . . _Edgar knelt and prodded the logs in the fire, causing it to crackle and sputter as he banked it. "I can't lose here. Can I?" He rose again.

"Thank you, Raven." He turned and offered a small smile, hope tremulous in his eyes once more. "Help me change the bandages and then I will rest."

"That is an acceptable delay," Raven responded.

Edgar sat once more although with a much lighter stance. "Tell me, Raven," he said, leaning on his head with his hand. "What does Lydia think of my party?"

"It's ridiculous affair much too soon after the last one," Raven replied, setting the medicine kit to one side and unwrapping a roll of clean bandages.

Edgar smirked. "Did you tell her why I arranged it?"

Raven removed some scissors from the kit. "Still absurd, I believe, my lord."

The Blue Earl's eyes sparked with mischief. "Of course," he purred. Edgar hummed under his breath as Raven worked.

* * *

><p>In my mind, nothing could be added onto the chapter after this moment. There was just too much to learn from reading between the lines. I hope my avid Lydiakelpie readers didn't mind the change of setting and shorter chapter. I will try to make it up to you all in the next one.<p>

The next chapter WILL be the duel I predicted at the end of the last chapter. Edgar kind of snuck in this one.

* * *

><p>For more information on this story and others, as well as updating information, check my profile. It will be updated often. My Late New Years present will be unleashing some of my other synopses for other plot bunnies up there.

5. Chapter 5

After such a long lapse in between chapters, I don't know what to say besides I am sorry. I also ask you to remember even if real life forces me to drop my writing from time to time, I will NEVER abandon them. I missed writing these characters and you have an extra LONG chapter for it, 12 pages in total. Thank you very much for your patience. I never intended for it to be this long before you got an update.

In addition, I will have a couple oneshots from Earl and Fairy uploaded in addition to this. One is a confession scene between Edgar and Lydia and another is a more somber reflection piece by Kelpie. Please accept them as an apology for neglecting you.

Thank you for giving my story a chance and following it,** RoseEmma,** and taking the effort to favorite this story during its long unintended hiatus,** Scarlet Rosaria, animelovernewbie,** and** julciawolf**.

_As I promised before, this IS the much-anticipated duel. Guess who will win before reading to find out. _

* * *

><p>~ Kelpie's Trap Part V ~<p>

The next morning a feminine shriek shook the house.

"Nico," Lydia whined, running hands through her hair, "why did you let me sleep in?" She leaned over to peer at her reflection and sighed at the static state of her hair. Her eyes narrowed a moment later. "Come on, Nico, there's far too much that needs to be accomplished today for your idea of a cat nap." She rushed past, trying to put on her stockings.

From above, on the mantelpiece, the fairy cat's tail swished back and forth. Nico snorted. "Don't blame me," he said. "You're the one who

stayed up all night last night with that kelpie character." He looked at his nails and licked some fur out of a claw "Besides, you needed a good rest," he continued, once finished. "Who is going to look out for your health if not me? Your men certainly don't."

My - " Lydia stumbled over her words, took a breath, and tried again. "Nico, we've been over this," she called over, fishing for pins on the basket of her bathroom counter. "They're not my men." She smiled a bit as some tucking with pins tamed the worst of the fizz out of her hair. She looked over her shoulder. "Also, I'm old enough to take care of myself, and I wanted to wake up at a decent time."

"This is," Nico murmured and then continued cleaning his tail. "This is a 'decent time,'" the fairy cat explained, waving his hand. " I mean the sun hasn't reached its zenith yet."

"That's close enough to noon to worry me," Lydia retorted. She trotted past him to the chair by the balcony, shaking her white shawl out and looking over it. "Please don't be wrinkled," she whispered, draping it over herself and inspecting it again. She sighed

And then shook her head at the fairy cat still lounging on her mantlepiece. "You know didn't need to worry," she stated, petting him between the ears. "Nothing really happened with Kelpie and me."

"I didn't say anything did." Her familiar flicked his ear and then licked his paw before setting another curl back behind her ear. He spread his arm. "'Come on, what's the hurry?" he asked. Lydia blinked and he set his head on his arms, watching her through lazy eyes. "It's not like you're preparing to meet royalty."

"Edgar is royalty!" Lydia hissed, pulling the shawl up and over her pink blouse and patting her pale blue skirt once again. "And my meeting is important. I have to cancel his plans for this week." She paused, her hand poised in midair. "Wait, Nico did you know about that?"

Nico cracked an eye open. "Know about what?"

"Well, that's good," Lydia murmured, playing with the pendant around her neck. "Sometimes you're just as stubborn as Kelpie, after all."

"Don't lump me with that frilly seahorse," Nico muttered, scratching his ear. "And I don't see why you're worried - if it's for something like that. It's not like you have a deadline." He lifted a paw up to pick up a brownie and move it along before it could play with his tail. "Lunch is just around the corner. Do it then and at your leisure."

Lydia sighed and a small smile lit her face. "You're a cat. Of course you would say that." She looked at herself in the mirror, "Edgar, he's stubborn. He won't let me go that easily." Turning around, she slipped her shoes on and opened the door. "Mornings give me more time to gently persuade him without interfering in his duties. So next timeâ€¦"

"Just tell him no and be done with it," came a low, sulky voice from beside her.

"Kelpie!" Lydia squeaked, tripping on her carpet.

Hearing no thud, Nico stretched and vaulted from the fireplace. "Cutting it kind of close, aren't you, seahorse?" he murmured as Lydia blushed in the arms of her admirer. "Waiting on the other side of her bedroom door?"

Kelpie grinned, unabashed. "I've been around her long enough to know she doesn't start screeching until she's dressed, cat."

Nico's tail swished as he tilted his head. "Hmmm, is that so?"

Lydia's cheeks burned again. "That's enough, Nico," she hissed. She chuckled at them both and smiled again. "Thank you for catching me, Kelpie, but I'm fine now. Will you let- "

"Unhand Lydia-sama, intruder, before I remove your offending hand."

"Raven!" Lydia gasped. "That's a little-" She halted as Kelpie tightened his embrace.

Kelpie chuckled. "Changed your mind about me being a friend, boy?" he asked. "That's a different tone from our dawn morning."

The faerie boy tilted his head. "I am hoping a warning will deter more advances," Raven returned. He paused and his tone darkened. "Let go of Lydia-sama."

Nico pranced in front of him and tapped his leg. "Come on, Raven. Can't we all go to lunch without fighting?" he inquired. He flicked his tail towards Kelpie. "It would help if you wouldn't provoke him, too."

Raven blinked.

"The gentleman fairy cat is quite right," a smooth elegant voice stated. The Blue Earl, flanked by their butler, walked up to the gathering at Lydia's door. "It's a beautiful morning, far too beautiful to be quarreling, and the kind of morning you share with others." He smirked over at Kelpie. "Will you be joining us, Mr. Kane?"

Kelpie frowned faintly, still holding Lydia, and then his cocky grin returned. "Don't mind if I do, Blue Earl. Lydia will be sitting next to me."

Edgar chuckled as he inclined his head slightly and offered Lydia his own hand. "I can arrange for her to sit between us as an apology for my rude behavior to you thus far. Since you are indeed Lydia's friend, I should be more courteous."

Lydia blinked wide eyes as she accepted the hand, letting herself be slightly pulled away from Kelpie's warmth. "Something is going on hereâ€¦ but I am not sure what," she murmured to herself.

Kelpie laughed lightly. "I don't know what you're planning, Earl," he tossed back, "but if I am a friend, then so are you."

Edgar smiled. "Is that so?"

_Oh dearâ€|. _

"_Lydia_, " Nico whispered, "I smell trouble."

"Um, thank you, Edgar. I'm sure we will enjoy it," Lydia interjected with a smile of her own. She squeezed his hand.

_It's a stormâ€|. It's definitely a storm. Whatever they're planning, with me in the middle, I want __**nothing **__to do with it! _

_And I still need to talk to Edgar. _

"Also, Edgar," she continued, "I am sorry I didn't make it to breakfast this morning. I must have lost track of time last night."

Edgar shook his head lightly. "When you were working so hard for my sake," he explained, leaning close, "how can I complain?" He paused and then inclined his head. "Thank you, my fairy."

Lydia flushed deeply. "Edgarâ€|"

She drew in a breath as her second escort pulled her backwards. "Don't be so sure all the time was for you, Earl," Kelpie called out, interrupting them. "She and I spent many hours together last night."

"I would hardly say that our time was as long as-"

"I am well aware of your sneaking in, seahorse," Edgar declared.

Lydia raised her hands. "Really, at that point, I wasn't really work-"

Edgar seized both of them. "And therefore, your presence is the reason she's late to breakfast with me," the Blue Earl finished smoothly. He pulled Lydia against him, large hands still enfolded around her own. Lips tilted upwards in triumph, his eyes narrowed. "Raven, you were looking for the reason I hadn't eaten yet. Here's the culprit."

"Very well, Edgar-sama."

Lydia held up a hand and turned to face Edgar. "It's not Kelpie's fault."

"If Mr. Kane hadn't kept you busy late into the night, you would have slept better, isn't that true?" the earl pressed.

"Wellâ€|. Maybeâ€|."

What do I do? What do I do to stop this?

Kelpie chuckled quietly. "Not a bad argument, Earl," he admitted, eyes glowing. "It was so good I almost fell for it. But you wouldn't set Raven onto someone for something that petty."

"I could still drive you from the grounds."

"You could, but don't I have a chance to defend myself? As the 'leader' of our kind," Kelpie inquired slowly, "don't you think that is fair?"

Edgar's eyes gleamed and he stood taller. "I doubt your response has anything in it of merit, but I will grant your request."

Kelpie grinned like a pirate. "Shall we take a bet on that, Mr. Earl?"

Edgar chuckled. "If you think you have a chance."

Looking between the two of them, Lydia sighed. Below her, Nico crossed his neck with a paw.

I know, Nico. There's nothing to be done now.

Kelpie's eyes narrowed. "If Lydia or one of your manservants agree with my reasoning, you will not serve liver with our meal as a means to get rid of me."

"Such a suspicious creature," Edgar murmured. He closed his eyes for a moment. "If I win," he intense mauve eyes darkened, "you will not set foot on these grounds for one full day, from dawn to the upcoming dawn, and there will be no night visits."

"Sounds reasonable," Kelpie stated. "As long as you can keep Lydia out of danger."

Edgar's hand slid up into his hair. "You needn't worry. I will always protect my fairy." He sobered. "Furthermore, I highly doubt the Prince is ready for a second attempt at my life."

"Then we- "

"-Agree."

Edgar stepped away from Lydia and spread his arms with a large smile. "I will now allow you to put up your defense, Mr. Kane, futile as it may be."

"You aren't the person who will be deciding that," Kelpie stated. He folded his hands and leaned against the wall. "Let's seeâ€¦ my crimes, at the moment, are preventing you from eating breakfast and keeping Lydia awake. Is that correct, Mr. Earl?"

"The correct form of my title is the Blue Earl or Lord Edgar, Mr. Kane," Edgar returned, "but yes, those are your crimes."

Kelpie smirked. "I hate to be the one to tell you this, milord," he emphasized, "but are you not old enough to eat on your own? Or do you need supervision?"

Edgar's eyes narrowed.

"Furthermore, Lydia was working on her account of the Prince's attack. Whose fault is it that she was involved in the violence that night?"

Edgar stayed silent, but his lips thinned.

Lydia tried to interject. "Umâ€¦ I chose to follow-"

Kelpie chuckled. "Finally, according to your own words, Lydia is your fairy doctor. Then, it is your responsibility to make sure she isn't so disturbed by what she witnessed." His eyes deepened. "The fact that I realized she needed a little emotional support is proof that I know her better than you."

Lydia looked between the two. "I don't think it's something that sim-" Edgar raised an arm to stop her.

He smiled gently. "My apologies, my fairy, but I can't let you defend me in these circumstances." Edgar's expression faded. "This is between the both of us."

"She may have the final say in the matter," Kelpie reminded him.

"I am well aware of that," the earl stated, "but as the prosecutor in this matter, I have another more opportunity to speak." He turned back to Kelpie.

His upper lip curled. "You're brave, Mr. Kane, having the nerve to mention my age when you were childish enough to spirit my fairy away, in a dream of all places."

Kelpie fingers jerked in their folded position.

"And that's not all," the earl continued. "Perhaps you wouldn't know, but it is considered rude to eat by oneself when waiting for your partner. Lydia and I have had a tradition of eating our morning meals together for a few weeks now, which also explains her adorable scream a short while ago." He paused and chuckled. "The fact that you don't understand the social understanding of this matter is my proof that you are little more than a skulking highwayman."

"You sure like to talk," muttered Kelpie.

Nico wound himself around Lydia's leg. "For once, they both have good points."

"Hush, Nico," Lydia whispered. "You're not helping here."

"However," Edgar announced, "I will admit that it is my fault and no one else's that Lydia observed the cruelty of my former master. I don't deny that."

He walked over to the fae at the wall. "That being said, was it really that which disturbed my fairy or was it your shameless flirting after I claimed her heart with my kiss â€¦ in the carriage?" he purred.

Kelpie's eyes narrowed. "What are you talking about?"

"WHA- WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, EDGAR!?" Lydia screeched, face flaming up. "That- that - " she stuttered, "It - what you said has nothing to do with this argument!"

"It doesn't?" Edgar inquired smoothly, lips still upturned in amusement.

Lydia placed a hand to her forehead and shook her head.

Raven looked to his master. "I have to agree with Lydia-sama, my lord. That event took place a couple days ago. What merit does that have here? Also, was it a kiss? I mean-"

Edgar lips lifted further. "That's enough, Raven. It seems I have upset my fairy."

Kelpie chuckled. "Thank you, Raven. I feel better now that I know this scoundrel hasn't sullied," he paused and stood off the wall, stepping into Edgar's space, "Lydia's mind in that regard."

Lydia sighed loudly. "Really, you two, I'm not a chil-"

"Sullied?" Edgar interrupted. "What a dirty word. I'll have you know that my duty is to sweep her off her feet." He grinned. "Again."

Kelpie's smirk grew. "I'll have you know that spiriting away is a much more thorough spell than that."

"Being proud of something I accused you of, I'm shocked you would be so giving in this matter."

"And why not?" Kelpie retorted. "Your manservant knows I returned her, and that doesn't change the fact that I have more than outdone you in the matter of sweeping Lydia off her feet."

"Kelpie!" Lydia murmured.

"Really?" Edgar responded. "And whose ring is she wearing?"

"Edgar!"

"I'll thank you for reminding me." Kelpie fired back. "That ring was originally in my possession."

"Stolen property," Edgar prompted, "if I am not mistaken. It belonged-"

"To the Fairy Queen," Kelpie finished for him. "Your _actual _fiancÃ©."

"You do know that that was settled, correct?" the earl asked. He chuckled. "Much like your engagement to Lydia."

"I'll have you know-"

"Gentlemen," Tompkins annunciated, "the luncheon has been prepared on the balcony." The fishman bowed, forcing the two of them to step away from each other. "If you will both follow me."

Edgar nodded in his direction. "Tompkins, did you hear anything of the matter at hand?"

The butler bowed once more. "As I see it, you both had excellent arguments and all but nullified the accusations towards each other."

"A draw thenâ€¦."

"However, there was one argument the kelpie made that I did not hear a good argument from you, sire, so I am afraid I will be removing the pieces of liver from the chef salad today." He bowed yet again. "My apologies. And if you will follow me." He turned around.

Kelpie grinned and folded his arms. "It seems there is at least one smart fellow at this ridiculous abode."

Lydia sighed yet again. _It's over. It's __**finally **__over. _She blinked. _But I do wonderâ€¦ which matter did Edgar fail to combat adequately?_

The Blue Earl shook his head with a wry smile. "If that is how our matter is seen, then, for now, I will extend my hospitality towards you, Mr. Kane. For one meal, we will share fair Lydia." He offered her his hand.

Kelpie looped his arm around her opposite arm. "Suits me. It's about time you had to show me some manners."

Edgar kissed Lydia's hand. "Don't worry, Mr. Kane. I will thoroughly educate you in what it is that a highwayman, such as yourself, could never attain in your rough life."

Lydia closed her eyes. _Who am I kidding? There's no way it's over. They've barely just begun._

Nico rose up onto his hind paws. "This is going to be a good meal."

Raven blinked. "What do you mean? Tompkins' meals usually are. Why is this any more so?"

And at that, Lydia started screeching the privacy of her own mind. _SERIOUSLY! Why can't I be like him and not know what's going on?!_

* * *

><p>I hope you were enjoyed the banter and Lydia's adorable oblivious reactions. I know I did. As soon as I got to those two, the story wrote itself. Now, if you guess right on what aspect of their duel Edgar failed to argue against, then I will tell you. If not, it will become clear in the next chapter or two. Your hint is that they both use the same word to emphasize a point, but Edgar misses the mark. Also, remember which is the main couple in this story.<p>

_The next chapter will probably be Lydia's collusion with both of 'her men' due to details revealed in that duel after lunch as well as Raven being inquisitive as always. Will she escape Edgar's weekend schemes? _

There is also a high chance that you will get a double update next time as this chapter was longer and changed the position of a draft

for a near future chapter. Enjoy your week and please review.

End
file.